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BALTIMORE CITY DELINQUENCY CASE PROCESSING STUDY:  
POST-DISPOSITION ADDENDUM

Prepared for the  
Baltimore City Juvenile Court  
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by

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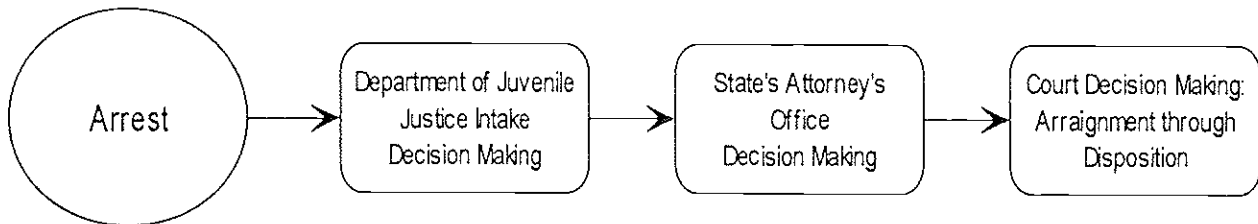
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BALTIMORE CITY DELINQUENCY CASE PROCESSING STUDY:  
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1. Introduction

The Maryland Justice Analysis Center at the University of Maryland at College Park completed a study of delinquency case processing in Baltimore City in November, 2001.<sup>1</sup> The objective of the study was to follow a sample of Baltimore City youth from arrest through court resolution, and to examine the number of days that elapsed between major case processing decision points. The primary decision points examined in the study are shown in the flowchart below.



The *Post-Disposition Addendum* will extend the existing evaluation by examining the post-disposition outcomes of the original sample of youth who were found delinquent by the juvenile court. By and large, youth found delinquent by the court were either placed on probation or committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). A small number of youth were also ordered to participate in the Baltimore City drug court.

The post-disposition phase of the case processing study will provide data on the time interval between the disposition hearing and the provision of DJJ services. More specifically, the study will assess the following: (a) the number of days that elapse between a commitment order and placement in an appropriate treatment program (among youth who are held pending placement); and (b) the number of days that elapse between a probation order and the first face-to-face contact with a DJJ probation officer for new probation cases.

The addendum will begin with a brief review of DJJ policy and procedure regarding probation and commitment orders. This review will be followed by the study methodology, results, and discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> See Souryal-Shriver, Claire and Charles Wellford (November, 2001). Baltimore City Delinquency Case Processing Study. College Park, MD: Maryland Justice Analysis Center.

## 2. Department of Juvenile Justice Policy and Procedure Overview

### 2.1 Commitment.

When the juvenile court commits a youth to DJJ, the court sets forth the general level of care to be provided by DJJ. The court determines, for example, whether a youth may be released to the community under the supervision of his or her parent(s)/legal guardian, released to the community under a community supervision program such as electronic monitoring, or held in a secure facility pending placement. While the court may determine the type of placement, it may not mandate placement in a specific DJJ program.<sup>2</sup> The specific program placement decision rests with DJJ.

Youth committed to DJJ are assigned an aftercare case manager. According to DJJ Policy, the aftercare case manager is expected to “assist with treatment goals while a youth is in residential care; and to plan, coordinate, and ensure the delivery of aftercare services when discharged.”<sup>3</sup>

Aftercare case managers are expected to complete an Individualized Service Plan for youth committed to residential care within 30 days of the disposition hearing.<sup>4</sup> DJJ policy further dictates that aftercare case managers shall meet with youth within 30 days of the commitment to an institution, and on a monthly basis thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Upon release from the institution, case managers shall meet with the youth on a weekly basis during the first month after release.

### 2.2 Probation.

Following disposition, each probation order is screened by the DJJ Baltimore City Central Assignment Office. The Assignment Office then forwards the case to the local probation office most proximate to the youth’s residence (using the youth’s zip code as a guide). If a youth was already on probation at the time of the current disposition, the Assignment Office forwards the case to the office of the supervising officer. Next, the case is assigned to a probation officer within the office. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the youth may be assigned to a probation officer within the Spotlight on Schools (SOS) or HotSpots probation units.

DJJ policy dictates that the supervising probation officer shall meet with the youth and parent (or guardian/custodian) in person to conduct a probation orientation. During the orientation session, the probation officer informs the youth and parent/guardian of the youth’s court status, rights and

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<sup>2</sup>*In re Demetrius J., Darvanion M., Shawn J.* 321 Md. 468; 583 A.2d 258 (1991).

<sup>3</sup>Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (10/1/94), Policy Number: 16.22F.

<sup>4</sup>Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (10/1/94), Policy Number: 20.03F.

<sup>5</sup>Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR). 16.03.01.12 (Individualized Service Plan---- Institution).

responsibilities. According to DJJ policy, the orientation meeting shall be completed “as soon as possible but no later than two (2) weeks after the date that DJS is notified of disposition.”<sup>6</sup> The probation officer is also required to develop a written Individualized Service Plan within 30 days of the court disposition<sup>7</sup>(or upon receipt of the court order).<sup>8</sup>

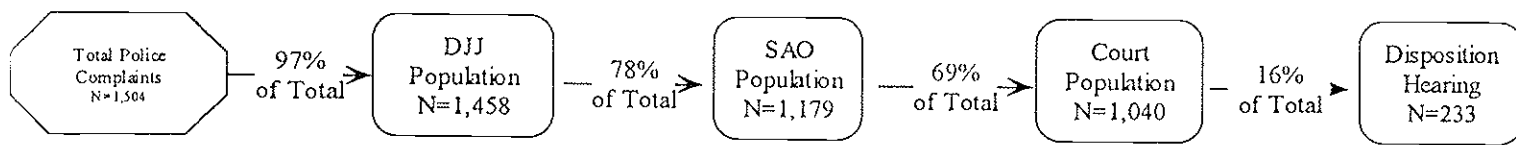
### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample.

The sample consisted of all youth arrested in Baltimore City during the months of June and July, 2000. The unit of analysis for the study was a police complaint number. The police complaint number, rather than the individual, was used as the unit of analysis for two reasons: (a) arrest data are incident driven and one arrest may result in multiple police complaints; and (b) some youth were arrested on more than one date during the two-month time frame. The sample therefore consisted of N=1,504 police complaints for N=1,329 juveniles. The majority of juveniles in the study faced one police complaint (86%).

As shown in Figure 1 below, 69% of the police complaints resulted in a petition filed with the court. Approximately, sixteen percent (16%) of the police complaints resulted in a disposition hearing.

**FIGURE 1.**



Expressed as a percentage of the Court Population, one in five of the cases filed with the court resulted in a disposition hearing (n=233 or 22%).<sup>9</sup> Disposition hearings took place between July, 2000 and July, 2001.

<sup>6</sup>Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (10/1/94), Policy Number: 20.02F; Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 16.03.01.04 (Orientation Process).

<sup>7</sup>Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (10/1/94), Policy Number: 20.03F.

<sup>8</sup>Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 16.03.01.05 (Individualized Service Plan--- Probation).

<sup>9</sup>Note that n=4 of the disposition hearings were still “open” at the end of the data collection period.

The vast majority of disposed juveniles were found delinquent by the court (97%). Delinquent youth were most commonly ordered to serve a term of probation (61%). Commitment orders were the second most common disposition outcome (35%), followed by participation in the drug court (3%). Almost one-half (45%) of the probation orders were for indefinite terms. The median length of a definite probation order equaled one year.

The percentage of youth placed on probation or committed in Baltimore City generally conforms to national trends. A recent study of youth adjudicated in 1998 nationwide revealed that probation is the most common disposition outcome (58%), followed by an out-of-home placement (26%), other disposition such as the payment of restitution or fines, or community service (11%), or release without sanction (5%).<sup>10</sup>

The target sample for the post-disposition phase of the case processing study consisted of cases resulting in either a probation order (n=137) or a commitment order (n=79). Due to the small number of drug court cases, these cases were excluded from the study.

Demographic, prior history, and offense characteristics of both the probation and commitment sample are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sample Demographic, Prior History, and Offense Characteristics.		
	Probation Sample N=134 <sup>11</sup>	Commitment Sample N=76
Age at Arrest, X (SD)	15.43 (1.61)	15.90 (1.34)
Sex, N (%): Male	127 (94.8)	73 (96.1)
Race/Ethnicity, N (%):		
Asian	1 (0.7)	—
African-American	122 (91.0)	70 (92.1)
Hispanic	1 (0.7)	—
Other	—	—
White	10 (7.5)	6 (7.9)

<sup>10</sup> Puzanchera, Chalres M. (February, 2002). *Juvenile Court Placement of Adjudicated Youth, 1989-1998*. OJJDP Fact Sheet. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the demographic analyses were conducted on the individual rather than the case level. Youth who received multiple probation or commitment orders are represented in the analysis a single time.

	Probation Sample N=134 <sup>11</sup>	Commitment Sample N=76
Prior Arrest, N (%): Yes	97 (72.4)	64 (84.2)
Number of Court Petitions, X (SD) Median=4	4.06 (2.32) Median=4	7.05 (3.48) Median=7
SAO Felony Charge, N (%): Yes	84 (62.7)	61 (80.3)
Delinquency Finding Offense Category, N (%) <sup>12</sup> :		
Drug	66 (49.3)	34 (44.7)
Person	37 (27.6)	12 (15.8)
Property	24 (17.9)	21 (27.6)
Miscellaneous	4 (3.0)	4 (5.3)
Multiple Categories	3 (2.2)	5 (6.6)

Youth in the probation and commitment samples were approximately 15 years of age at the time of arrest. Youth in both samples were predominantly male (95% and 96%) and African-American (91% and 92%). Approximately, 72% of the probation sample had a prior arrest, with a median of four juvenile court delinquency petitions (at the time of data collection). Approximately, 84% of the commitment sample had a prior arrest, with a median of seven juvenile court delinquency petitions (at the time of data collection). Sixty-three percent (63%) of the probation sample and 80% of the commitment sample were charged with at least one felony by the state's attorney's office (SAO).

Almost one-half of the probationers were found delinquent of a drug offense (49%). Probationers were next most frequently found delinquent of a person offense (28%), followed by a property offense (18%). Across all counts (including multiple counts for a single case), the most prevalent delinquent offenses included: (a) CDS possession (31.3%); (b) Assault Second Degree (18.1%); (c) CDS possession with intent (14.6%); (d) Unauthorized Use (misdemeanor) (8.3%); and Theft < \$300 (4.2%).

The sample of committed youth were also most likely to have been found delinquent of a drug

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<sup>12</sup>The vast majority of cases in the probation (92.5%) and the commitment (82.9%) samples were found delinquent of one count. If a youth was found delinquent of multiple offenses within the same offense category (i.e., drug, person, property, miscellaneous), the case was categorized accordingly. If a youth was found delinquent of multiple offenses across more than one offense category, it was counted as a Multiple Category case.

offense (45%). Property offenses (28%) were the second most common offense category, followed by person offenses (16%). Across all counts (including multiple counts for a single case), the most prevalent delinquent offenses included: (a) CDS Possession (20.2%), CDS Possession with Intent (18.1%), Unauthorized Use (misdemeanor) (8.5%), Assault Second Degree (6.4%), Theft < \$300 (5.3%), Driving without a License (3.2%), and Fleeing and Eluding (3.2%).

By way of national comparison, the majority of youth placed on probation or in an out-of-home placement nationwide in 1998 were males (76% and 85%, respectively).<sup>13</sup> Most youth placed on probation were white (69%), followed by African-American (28%) youth, and youth of other races (3%). Similarly, most youth placed in out-of-home placements nationwide were white (61%), followed by African-American youth (36%), and youth of other races (3%). Probationers were most commonly found delinquent of property offenses (47%), followed by person offenses (22%), public order offenses (19%), and lastly drug offenses (12%). Youth placed in out-of-home placements were most commonly found delinquent of property offenses (41%), followed by person offenses (24%), public order offenses (24%), and drug offenses (11%).

### 3.2 Procedure.

*3.2.1 Commitment Study.* DJJ's information system, ASSIST, was used to collect commitment data. Specifically, the name(s) of the pending placement and treatment facilities, the placement process and outcome, and the date of the placement were collected. ASSIST folders (commitment, detention, and aftercare), the Placement Summary and Admission Type, and the Review Summary were used to collect these data.

Note that the researchers attempted to collect data on the first face-to-face contact between committed youth and their assigned aftercare case manager. Data collection forms were distributed to aftercare case managers, and the date and location of the first contact were requested. Preliminary analyses of the returned data collection forms (roughly, two-thirds of the forms had been returned) revealed data collection issues that compromised the validity of the study. First, a substantial proportion of the cases had an on-going relationship with the case manager that preceded the target disposition date. These case managers reported their first contact with the client, not the first contact subsequent to the target disposition. Second, another large proportion of case managers appeared to have reported their first contact with the youth

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<sup>13</sup> Puzzanchera, Charles M. (February, 2002). *Juvenile Court Placement of Adjudicated Youth, 1989-1998. OJJDP Fact Sheet.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Puzzanchera, Charles, Stahl, Anne L., Finnegan, Terrence A., Snyder, Howard, N., Poole, Rowen S., and Nancy Tierney. (May, 2000). *Juvenile Court Statistics.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

subsequent to a transfer, rather than the initial post-disposition contact. Due primarily to the preceding data collection issues and questions raised about the relevance of the research question given the on-going relationship between many committed youth and DJJ staff, the researchers did not pursue this portion of the study.

*3.2.2 Probation Study.* The goal of the Probation Study was to calculate the number of days that elapsed between the disposition hearing and the first face-to-face probation contact. Probation officer-client contact data are typically contained in written "field notes" maintained by probation officers, and are not recorded in ASSIST. In order to locate the probation case files and field notes, ASSIST was used to locate the name of the current juvenile counselor (or most recent juvenile counselor if the case had been closed).

Researchers then asked the current (or most recent) juvenile counselor to provide contact data. A data collection form containing identifying information on each case (probation officer, local office, youth's name, date of birth, police complaint number, and disposition date) was created. Each probation officer was asked to provide the date the case was assigned to them and their first post-disposition contact. The Baltimore City Area Director distributed the forms along with a cover letter explaining the study to local office supervisors, who in turn distributed the forms to the probation officers involved in the study. The data collection forms were then returned to the Area Director and forwarded to the researchers.

During the course of the study, several data collection issues arose. Probation cases were often transferred over the course of the supervision period. Transfer reasons included the resignation or reassignment of DJJ staff, transfer from investigatory officer to supervisory officer, a change in the client's address, or a shift in the type of supervision, e.g., shift to Spotlight on Schools or Hot Spots probation. As a consequence, the probation officer who possessed the case file was not necessarily the probation officer who conducted the first face-to-face visit with the youth. When completing the data collection forms, probation officers commonly recorded their first face-to-face visit subsequent to the transfer, rather than the first *post-disposition* face-to-face contact.

To collect the relevant date for the study, the researchers contacted these probation officers by telephone and asked whether the date pertinent to the study was available in the case file. Probation officers were able to provide the first post-disposition contact if it was noted in the field notes or transfer summary. In conducting the follow-up telephone calls, it was clear, however, that the field notes of the initial probation officer were generally not included in the case file. If the field notes were not included in the file and the first face-to-face contact was not otherwise noted (e.g., in the transfer summary), the first post-disposition contact was not available.

In addition, some cases were already closed by the time of data collection. If a case was closed, the researcher attempted to locate the case file in the "closed" files room in the DJJ Fallsway Office.

#### 4. Results: Commitment and Placement Study

The post-disposition outcome of a sample of cases committed to DJJ was tracked. Each of the cases was located in ASSIST and placement data were recorded. The intent of this part of the study was to first document commitment order outcomes, and then assess the number of days that elapsed between court disposition and placement for those youth who were held pending placement prior to placement.

The commitment sample consisted initially of n=79 cases. Three cases (n=3) were excluded from the analysis as they were concurrently involved in the criminal justice system, resulting in a final sample size of n=76.

Ten commitment alternatives were distinguished with the assistance of DJJ: (a) placement in the community with parent/guardian; (b) foster care; (c) treatment foster care; (d) group home; (e) therapeutic group home; (f) in-patient substance abuse program; (g) residential treatment center; (h) youth center; (i) special treatment center - secure; and (j) special treatment center - staff secure. A brief description of each commitment alternative is provided below.

- *Parental/guardian placement:* Placement in family home under supervision of parent/guardian with community treatment plan.
- *Foster Care:* Placement in community home under the supervision of foster parents.
- *Treatment Foster Care:* Placement in community home under the supervision of foster parents who have received special training and have access to support services such as counseling. Examples include Family Advocacy.
- *Group Home:* Placement in a licensed home for children who need more structure and supervision than would be available in a foster home. A formal program of basic care, social work, and health care services is provided. Examples include Maple Shade Group Home or Florence Crittendon Group Home.
- *Therapeutic Group Home:* Placement in a licensed home for children who have medically diagnosed disorders such as emotional disturbance, schizophrenia, or bi-polar disorder. Structure, supervision and mental health services (including the provision of medication, if necessary) are provided. Examples include Devereux Maryland Group.
- *In-Patient Substance Abuse Program:* Placement in a group home intended for youth with a history of drug and alcohol abuse. Examples include Mountain Manor or the William Donald Schaefer House.
- *Residential Treatment Program:* Placement in a program for youth with serious and chronic emotional disturbance or mental illness. The program is not necessarily secure. Services provided include group and individual counseling, close supervision, 24 hour crisis intervention, restraint capability, contained educational program and medical management. Examples include Edgemeade at Focus Point or the Regional Institute for Children/Adolescents-Baltimore (Rica).
- *Youth Centers:* Placement in a program intended for older boys (14 years of age or older) who are in good physical health. Youth live and work outdoors. The focus of the program is on group activities,

including group counseling and discussion. The group process focuses on correcting thinking errors which may have contributed to delinquency. Examples include the Backbone Mountain Youth Center, Maple Run Youth Center, or Meadow Mountain Youth Center.

- *Special Treatment Center--Secure:* Placement in a secure, 24-hour institutional program. This placement is the most physically restrictive placement for the treatment of youth in the juvenile justice system. Examples include Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School and the Victor Cullen Center. The Charles H. Hickey School operates four programs: a maximum security committed program, a medium security committed program, a short-term impact and accountability program, and a residential treatment center for sex offenders.
- *Special Treatment Center-Staff Secure:* Placement in a staff-secure, 24-hour institutional program. Examples include the Thomas O'Farrell Youth Center.

The actual DJJ placements are shown in Table 4.1. The most common placements were placement in a Special Treatment Center with secure confinement (34%) or placement in the home under parent/guardian supervision (22%). Another 14% were placed in group homes such as Maple Shade Group Home or Florence Crittendon Group Home. Placement in a Residential Treatment Center was the next most common treatment alternative (8%).

Placement Type	Specific Placement Examples	Actual Placement
		N=74
Parent/guardian	Bethesda Day Treatment Program	16 (21.6)
Foster Home	—	0 (—)
Treatment Foster Home	Family Advocacy	3 (4.1)
Group Home	Florence Crittendon Group Home	10 (13.5)
Therapeutic Group Home	Devereux Maryland Group	2 (2.7)
In-patient Substance Abuse Program	Mountain Manor	4 (5.4)
Residential Treatment Center	Edgemeade at Focus Point	6 (8.1)
Youth Center	Backbone Mountain Youth Center	4 (5.4)
Special Treatment Center - Secure	Charles H. Hickey School	25 (33.8)
Special Treatment Center - Staff Secure	Thomas O'Farrell Center	4 (5.4)

Prior to placement in the recommended treatment program, one-half of the committed youth (n=38, 50%) were held in “pending placement” status prior to their placement (see Table 4.2). At the time of the target disposition, another 17% (n=13) were already committed or were being held on pending placement status. A smaller proportion of youth were: (a) placed subsequent to the disposition date without having been held “pending placement” (n=3, 4%); (b) placed on the disposition date (n=2, 3%); or (c) placed in a treatment program after a failed community

placement (n=2, 3%). Twenty-one percent (21%) of the sample was placed in the community under the supervision of a parent/guardian. Many of these youth were required to participate in the Bethesda Day Treatment program.

Table 4.2 Sample Placement Process.	
Sample Placement Process	N=76
Held "pending placement" prior to placement	38 (50.0)
Community placement under parental/guardian supervision	16 (21.1)
Already committed on a previous commitment at time of disposition	9 (11.8)
Already pending placement on a previous commitment at time of disposition	4 (5.3)
Placed without being held "pending placement"	3 (3.9)
Placed in treatment program on disposition date	2 (2.6)
Placed after failed community placement	2 (2.6)
Other <sup>14</sup>	2 (2.6)

*Pending Placement Status.* As shown in Table 4.3 below, most pending-placement youth were held on pending placement status at the Cheltenham Youth Facility (66%). Another 24% were held at the Maryland Youth Residence Center (a shelter care facility). The remaining youth were held at either Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School or the Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center.

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<sup>14</sup> The "other" category consists of the following cases: (a) youth (n=1) held in pending placement status and then released to the community for participation in the Bethesda Day Treatment program; and (b) case (n=1) where a CINA exception request was filed subsequent to the commitment order eventually resulting in concurrent commitment to DJJ and DSS. The youth was placed on pending placement status on CD/EM, and the final placement was not clear to the researcher.

Table 4.3 Pending Placement Facility.	
Pending Placement Facility	N=38
Cheltenham Youth Facility	25 (65.8)
Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School	3 (7.9)
Maryland Youth Residence Center	9 (23.7)
Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center	1 (2.6)

The number of days that elapsed between the disposition date and the ultimate placement date is shown in Table 4.4. This figure includes only those youth who were held on pending placement status. Hence, it excludes the following categories of youth: (a) youth who were placed in the community; (b) youth who were already committed or on pending placement status for a previous delinquency finding at the time of the target disposition; (c) youth who were placed without being held pending placement; and (d) youth who were placed after a failed community placement.

Table 4.4 Number of Days Between Disposition Date and DJJ Placement Date Among Youth Who Were Held "Pending Placement" by Pending Placement Facility and Placement Category.			
	N	Mean (SD) Median	Interquartile Range (90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
Disposition Date to DJJ Placement Date	N=38	25.97 (23.84) Median=17	10 to 31 days (61 days)
<i>Placement Duration by "Pending Placement" Facility:</i>			
If held pending placement at Cheltenham, Charles H. Hickey School, or Waxter's:			
Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=29	23.83 (25.10) Median=15	9 to 29 days (61 days)
If held pending placement at Maryland Youth Residence Center:			
Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=9	32.89 (18.77) Median=28	20 to 42 days (68 days)

Table 4.4 Number of Days Between Disposition Date and DJJ Placement Date Among Youth Who Were Held "Pending Placement" by Pending Placement Facility and Placement Category.			
	N	Mean (SD) Median	Interquartile Range (90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
<i>Placement Duration by Placement Category:</i>			
If placed in Treatment Foster Home or Group Home:  Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=10	28.7 (17.12) Median=24	17 to 28 days (58.5 days)
If placed in Substance Abuse Program, Residential Treatment Center, or Youth Center:  Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=8	25.38 (17.94) Median=18	12.5 to 35.5 days (61 days)
If placed in Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School:  Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=10	11.7 (8.3) Median=9.5	8 to 15 days (23.5 days)
If placed in Victor Cullen or the O'Farrell Youth Center:  Disposition Date to Placement Date	N=10	38.0 (36.44) Median=31.5	7 to 55 days (93 days)

As shown in Table 4.4, the median number of days between the disposition date and the placement date was 17 days (average of 26 days). The middle 50% of placements took place between 10 and 31 days after disposition. Ten percent (10%) of the cases were not placed for 61 days or more.

Time spent pending placement was also examined as a function of the pending placement facility. Two categories of pending placement facilities were assessed: (a) detention/commitment facilities (i.e., Charles H. Hickey School, Cheltenham, and Waxter's); and (b) shelter care (Maryland Youth Residence Center). Youth held pending placement in detention/commitment facilities were placed in a median of 15 days (average of 24 days), whereas youth held pending placement

in shelter care were placed in a median of 28 days (average of 33 days).

Similarly, time spent pending placement was examined as a function of placement category. Four types of placement categories were examined: (a) treatment foster care or group home; (b) substance abuse program, residential treatment center, or youth center; (c) Charles H. Hickey School; and (d) Victor Cullen Center and the O'Farrell Youth Center. The Charles H. Hickey School was distinguished from the other two special treatment centers (Victor Cullen Center and the O'Farrell Youth Center) due to its greater capacity as well as to sample size considerations. The results revealed that youth ultimately placed at Charles H. Hickey School spent the least number of days awaiting placement (median of 9.5 days), while youth placed in special treatment centers, such as Victor Cullen, spent the longest period of time on pending placement status (median=31.5 days).

In summary, roughly three weeks elapsed between the disposition hearing and the final placement for youth who were committed and held pending placement. This duration varied somewhat by the pending placement facility as well as by the ultimate placement. Youth slated for participation in a Charles H. Hickey School program spent the fewest number of days awaiting placement, while youth slated for participation in other special treatment centers (i.e., Victor Cullen and the O'Farrell Youth Center) spent the longest period of time awaiting placement.

## 5. Results: Probation Study.

The probation study focused on the time interval between the disposition date and the initial face-to-face contact with a probation officer. The total duration was also disaggregated by the following processing steps: (a) the time interval between the case "open date" and the case assignment date (i.e., the date the case was assigned to a probation officer for supervision); and (b) the time interval between the case assignment date and the first face-to-face contact date.

The probation sample consisted of n=137 probation cases. A small number of cases (n=5) were excluded from the study for the following reasons: (a) the case was transferred outside of Baltimore City (n=2); (b) the youth was involved in the adult system (n=1); and (c) the researcher was not able to locate the target probation case in ASSIST (n=2). The final sample size therefore consisted of n=132 probation cases.

Since contact data are not available in ASSIST, the date of the first post-disposition contact was provided by probation officers by means of a data collection form. If a probation officer recorded their first contact with the youth, rather than the first *post-disposition* contact, the researcher contacted these probation officers by telephone to collect the correct date. The availability of this date in the case file following transfer proved to be problematic. Data collection outcomes are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Probation Survey Data Collection Outcomes.	
	N=132
1 <sup>st</sup> Post-Disposition Contact Date Available (New Probation Case Opened)	54 (40.9)
Prior Probation Relationship (Contact date precedes disposition)	21 (15.9)
Investigation Relationship (Contact date precedes disposition)	8 (6.1)
1 <sup>st</sup> Post-Disposition Contact Unavailable <sup>15</sup>	35 (26.5)
Closed Case File Not Found	11 (8.3)
Other <sup>16</sup>	3 (2.3)

As shown in Table 5.1, the initial post-disposition, face-to-face contact for a newly opened probation case was available for approximately 41% of the sample. The date was not available if the youth had an on-going relationship with the probation officer (16%) or if the probation officer served as the investigatory officer (6%), as the dates reported by the probation officer in these cases preceded the target disposition date.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the first contact dates were not available. They were most commonly unavailable due to the transfer of a case and the lack of documentation in the case file. Another 8% of the cases were not available because the case file was not located among closed files.

Thus, the following analyses will be based on the subsample of newly opened probation cases where the initial contact date was available. Table 5.2 illustrates the time that elapses between the disposition date and the date of the first face-to-face contact.

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<sup>15</sup> First post-disposition contact date was unavailable for the following reasons: (a) transfer case where the date was not available in case file per telephone conversation with most recent probation officer; (b) transfer case and telephone contact with probation officer was not made; and (c) data collection form was not returned or incomplete.

<sup>16</sup> "Other" cases included: (a) n=1 case where the client moved; (b) n=1 case where the client was AWOL and contact had not taken place; and (c) n=1 case where the client had been committed.

Table 5.2 Number of Days between Disposition Date and DJJ Probation Outcomes.			
	N	Mean (SD) Median	Interquartile Range (90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
TOTAL DURATION:			
Disposition Date to Initial Face-to-Face Contact	N=54 <sup>17</sup>	24.72 (17.60) Median=19.5	9 to 35 days (53 days)
TOTAL DURATION DISAGGREGATED BY DJJ PROCESSING STAGES			
Disposition Date to DJJ Case "Open" Date	N=51	2.82 (7.54) Median=1	0 to 2 days (6 days)
DJJ Case "Open" Date to Probation Officer Assignment Date	N=50	5.70 (10.93) Median=1	0 to 6 days (15.5 days)
Probation Officer Assignment Date to Initial Face-to-Face Contact	N=53 <sup>18</sup>	16.34 (13.72) Median=13	7 to 17 days (40 days)

As shown in Table 5.2, the median number of days between the disposition date and the initial face-to-face contact was 19.5 days (average of 25 days). The middle 50% of first face-to-face contacts with probation officers took place between 9 and 35 days after disposition. Ten percent (10%) of the initial face-to-face contacts required 53 days or more.

The total number of days between the disposition date and initial face-to-face contact was disaggregated by the following DJJ processes: (a) the disposition date to the date the case was opened by DJJ; (b) the DJJ case "open" date to the probation officer assignment date; and (c) the probation officer assignment date to the initial face-to-face contact date.

A median of 1 day elapsed between the disposition date and the date the case was opened by DJJ

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<sup>17</sup> The estimate includes n=2 cases where the youth failed to appear for at least one scheduled probation appointment. If these n=2 cases are excluded from the analysis, the average number of days between disposition and 1<sup>st</sup> contact equals 23.56 days (SD=16.78), and the median equals 18.5 days.

<sup>18</sup> The estimate includes n=2 cases where the youth failed to appear for at least one scheduled probation appointment. If these cases are excluded, the average number of days from case assignment date to first face-to-face contact equals 14.98 days (SD=11.94), and the median equals 13 days.

(average of 3 days). A median of 1 day elapsed between the DJJ Case Open Date and the Probation Officer Assignment Date (average of 6 days). And lastly, a median of 13 days elapsed between the Probation Officer Assignment Date and the Initial Face-to-Face Contact (average of 16 days).

In summary, probationers and a family member/guardian meet with a probation officer within roughly three weeks of the disposition hearing (median=19.5 days; average=25 days). Seventy-five percent of the first contacts took place within 35 days of the disposition hearing.

## 6. Conclusion.

The intent of this project was to follow a sample of cases beyond court disposition and to examine the time that elapses from a delinquent finding to the provision of treatment services by DJJ. Two samples were followed: (a) a sample of youth committed to DJJ; and (b) a sample of probationers.

The study extended the Baltimore City Delinquency Case Processing study by assessing the time interval between the disposition hearing and either the date of placement (among youth committed to DJJ and held pending placement) or the first face-to-face contact among probationers.

### 6.1 Commitment Study.

Slightly over one-third of the sample of delinquent youth was committed to DJJ by the court (35%). Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the total sample was ultimately placed in an out-of-home program. Committed youth were most commonly found delinquent of a drug offense (45%). CDS possession and CDS possession with intent were the most frequent delinquent offenses.

Ten placement options were distinguished for purposes of the study. Placement options ranged from placement in the community under supervision of a parent/guardian to placement in a 24-hour, secure institution. Notably, the two most common placements fell on opposite ends of the placement continuum. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the sample was placed in a secure Special Treatment Center, and 22% of the sample was placed in the community. The next most frequent placement option was placement in a group home (14%).

One-half of the sample was held on pending placement status prior to final placement for the target disposition.<sup>19</sup> The majority of these youth (66%) were held at the Cheltenham Youth Facility or the Maryland Youth Residence Center (MYRC) (24%). Youth who were held on pending placement status spent a median of 17 days (average of 26 days) on pending placement status.

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<sup>19</sup>Note that 17% of the sample (n=13) was already committed or pending placement on a previous commitment at the time of the target disposition.

Youth held in detention/commitment facilities (i.e., Cheltenham, Charles H. Hickey School, or Waxter's) spent a median of 15 days (average of 24 days) on pending placement status compared to youth held at MYRC who spent a median of 28 days (average of 33 days) on pending placement status.

The results also revealed that youth who were ultimately placed at Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School spent substantially fewer days on pending placement status (median of 9.5 days). Youth ultimately placed at either Victor Cullen or the O'Farrell Center spent the longest period of time on pending placement status (a median of 31.5 days). The far greater capacity of Charles H. Hickey School (across 4 programs) relative to the other facilities likely explains the more expeditious placement of youth slated for placement there.

Time spent on pending placement status was recently studied statewide in Maryland as part of a larger investigation of youth on pending placement status (Holman & Wade, 2001).<sup>20</sup> The authors found that youth in their sample spent an average of 48 days on pending placement status prior to placement or prior to the research interview. The Baltimore City youth in their study (n=16) spent an average of 51 days on pending placement status.

The authors randomly selected a sample of n=58 youth from a list of youth who were pending placement in a facility during one day in late February, 2001 and one day in mid April, 2001.<sup>21</sup> The sample was stratified by pending placement facility. The researchers calculated the time between the start of pending placement status and the date youth either: (a) entered a placement facility; or (b) were interviewed as part of the authors research project (if they had not yet been placed).

The authors also compared their sample results to the results obtained using the universe of youth on pending placement on one day in late February and one day in mid April, 2001. At the time these rosters of youth were drawn, these youth had spent an average of 33 and 32 days on pending placement status.

The difference in the results of the present study and the Holman et al. (2001) study may stem from differences in the samples selected for study. Holman et al. (2001) selected a sample of youth on pending placement status on two specific days in 2001. The sample was selected from all youth on pending placement status statewide. A substantial proportion of their sample were probation violators (60%), most of whom had violated a technical condition of probation.

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<sup>20</sup>Holman, Barry and Sue Wade (August, 2001). Doing Deadtime: An Examination of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice Pending Population and System. Baltimore, Maryland: National Center on Institutions and Alternatives.

<sup>21</sup>Since the list of youth on pending placement status does not include youth who had been on pending placement status for less than 5 days, these youth were excluded from the sample.

In contrast, each sample member in the present study had been found delinquent of a new offense. The sample consisted of Baltimore City cases only, and due to the wide range of disposition dates (July, 2000 through July, 2001), the examination was less likely to have been influenced by a period effect (e.g., capacity issues during a particular time period).

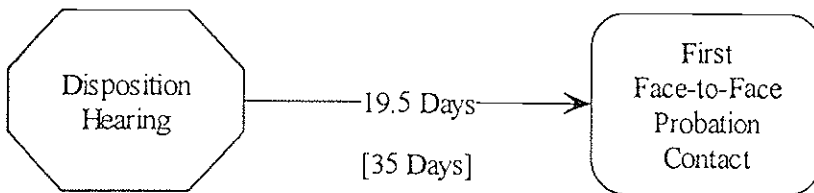
In summary, the results of the present study indicate that youth committed in Baltimore City are most commonly placed in a secure, Special Treatment Center or placed in the community. One half of the committed youth were held in a facility (or structured shelter care) prior to placement. Broadly speaking, these youth spent three weeks on pending placement status prior to placement (median=17 days; average=26 days). Seventy-five percent (75%) of the sample was placed in 31 days or less.

## 6.2 Probation Study.

Most youth found delinquent in the present sample (61%) were ordered to serve a probation term. For roughly three-quarters of the sample, this was their first probation term in Baltimore City. Almost one-half of the probationers had been found delinquent of a drug offense, most commonly CDS possession.

Figure 2 illustrates the number of days that elapse between the disposition hearing and the initial face-to-face probation contact. The median is shown on the arrow, and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is shown in brackets below the arrow.

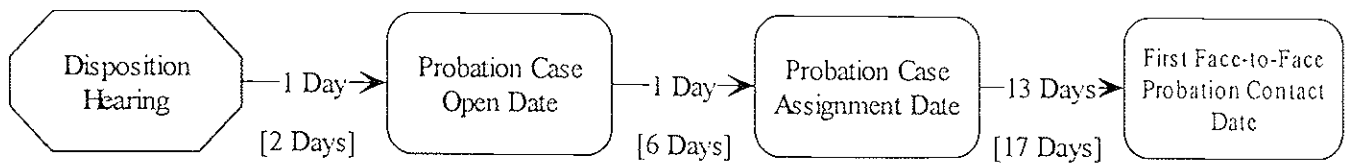
**FIGURE 2.**



Analysis of the newly opened probation cases where the first contact date was available revealed that a median of 19.5 days (average of 25 days) elapsed between the disposition date and the first face-to-face contact (see Figure 2). Seventy-five percent (75%) of the sample met with their assigned probation officer within 35 days of the disposition hearing.

Figure 3 depicts the number of days that elapsed between each processing point. The median is shown on the arrow, and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is shown in brackets below the arrow.

FIGURE 3.



As shown in Figure 3, a median of one day elapsed between the disposition date and the date the case was recorded as being opened in ASSIST; a median of one day elapsed between the date the case is opened and the date it was assigned to a supervising officer; and a median of 13 days elapsed between the date the case was assigned and the date of the first face-to-face contact. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the cases were opened within two days of the disposition hearing; 75% of the cases were assigned to a supervisory officer within 6 days of the case open date; and 75% of the initial face-to-face contacts occurred within 17 days of the case assignment date.

Due to the data collection issues that arose and the necessity of relying on a subsample of cases for the analysis, an important question that arises is whether the cases that were excluded from the analysis differed in a systematic manner from the cases that were included in the analysis. If the cases that were excluded from the analysis (i.e., cases where the first face-to-face contact was not documented in the case file) differed systematically from the cases that were included in the analysis, and this difference was related to the outcome measure (i.e., first contact with a probation officer post-disposition), the results may be biased.

To address this possibility, we examined the number of days that elapsed between the case assignment date and the first contact date *subsequent* to transfer. The examination revealed that the number of days that elapsed between the case assignment date (after a transfer) and the first contact date was quite similar for these cases. The average number of days that elapsed between the case assignment date and the first face-to-face contact equaled 14 days (median=13 days).<sup>22</sup> In other words, the number of days that elapsed between case assignment date and first contact did not appear to vary depending on whether the first contact was made by the probation officer initially assigned to the case or the probation officer who received the case as a transfer during the supervisory period.

The data collection required for this study was clearly retrospective in nature. Target disposition hearings took place between July, 2000 and July, 2001. Given that contact data are not recorded in ASSIST, probation officers were often asked to report events that occurred over one year ago. This was particularly difficult when cases had been transferred or were closed. Future examinations of this case processing phase should attempt to replicate these findings using a more

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<sup>22</sup> These figures excludes n=2 cases where the client was AWOL, and n=1 failure to appear for the scheduled appointment.

prospective research design.

In summary, the Baltimore City Delinquency Case Processing study revealed that routine intake and arraignment cases were resolved in a median of 198 days. Emergency intake and arraignment cases were resolved in a median of 63 days. Broadly speaking, the results of the Case Processing Addendum suggested that an additional three weeks elapsed from court disposition to the provision of treatment services by DJJ. Among committed youth who were held pending placement, a median of 17 days (average=26 days) elapsed between the disposition hearing and program placement. Similarly, the median number of days that elapsed between the disposition hearing and the initial face-to-face contact among new probation cases was 19.5 days (average=25 days).

To conclude, state statutory provisions, Code of Maryland Regulations, and court rules have been promulgated to govern case processing durations. The Maryland Court of Special Appeals has also ruled that juveniles are entitled to speedy trial rights. The findings of the Baltimore City Delinquency Case Processing study suggest that for a non-trivial proportion of cases, case processing time exceeded the relevant standard.